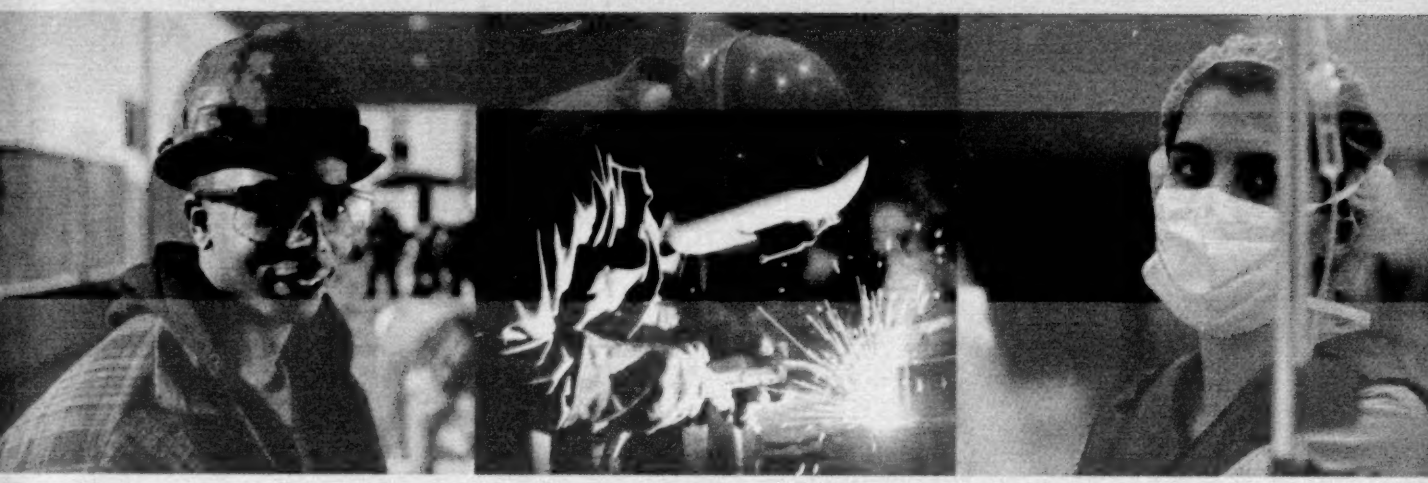

Workers' Advisers Program

Annual Report

FOR THE
FISCAL YEAR ENDING
March 31, 2014

NOVA SCOTIA

NOVA SCOTIA
Chief Worker Adviser

Workers' Advisers Program
5670 Spring Garden Road
Suite 502
PO Box 1063
Halifax, Nova Scotia
B3J 2X1

902 424-5050 T
1 800 774-4712
TOLL FREE IN NS
902 424-0530 F

Kenny LeBlanc, B.A., M.A., LL.B.
Chief Worker Adviser

Direct telephone: (902) 424-0460
email: leblankh@gov.ns.ca

May 1, 2014

The Honourable Kelly Regan
Minister of Labour & Advanced Education
5151 Terminal Road
Halifax, NS

Dear Minister Regan:

In accordance with Section 268 of the *Workers' Compensation Act*, S.N.S. 1994-95 c.10, as am., I have the honour of submitting the Workers' Advisers Program Annual Report for the period April 1, 2013, to March 31, 2014.

Yours truly,

Kenny LeBlanc
Barrister & Solicitor
Chief Worker Adviser

copy: Duff Montgomerie, Deputy Minister
Labour & Advanced Education

copy: Barbara Jones Gordon, Executive Director
Labour Services Branch
Labour & Advanced Education

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Letter from the Chief Worker Adviser

The Workers' Advisers Program had another busy and productive year in 2013/2014. At year-end the Program had 1101 active files. During the year the Program had 884 requests for service/files opened, 641 files were closed, and we provided service to 1752 clients.

In 2013/2014 the Program filed 366 appeals with the Workers' Compensation Appeals Tribunal ("WCAT") on behalf of workers. We also filed 187 appeals to Hearings Officers of the Workers' Compensation Board ("WCB") and 3 appeals to the Nova Scotia Court of Appeal.

In the summer of 2012 the Program revised and implemented a new intake process to deal with new requests for legal services from injured workers. The Program's target wait time for a worker to receive contact from a Workers' Adviser is 6 weeks. This process continues to work well.

In 2013/2014, with 884 requests for service, the average province-wide wait time for service was 6.4 weeks. This service wait time was longer than otherwise would have been the case because the Program did not do any new intakes in December 2013 to enable us to carry out an audit of all of our active files and ensure medical-legal requests and other tasks were up-to-date.

As I reported in previous years, the litigious and adversarial nature of the workers' compensation appeal process continues to be a significant factor impacting on the Program's work. Employers regularly contest and participate in workers' appeals, which has significant implications for the workers' compensation system, including contributing to delays in dealing with appeals. This matter continues to be the subject of discussion among stakeholders in the workers' compensation system.

An ongoing significant pressure for the Program's budget are the costs associated with obtaining medical information that we request to help in the pursuit of workers' appeals. The need to obtain medical information in more cases is also related to the adversarial nature of the appeal system.

Despite these financial pressures, the Program finished the year at 97% of our budget authority.

Last year I reported that we were successful at the Nova Scotia Court of Appeal in *Enterprise Cape Breton Corporation v. Hogan*, 2013 NSCA 33 (CanLII), which confirmed that Early Retirement Incentive Program benefits payable to former Devco employees cannot be used to reduce any earnings-replacement benefits these employees may be receiving from the WCB. ECBC, Devco's successor, applied to the Supreme Court of Canada for leave to appeal from the Court's decision. In August 2013 we received the Supreme Court of Canada's decision dismissing ECBC's application for leave to appeal.

Regarding ERIP benefits, until December 2009 the WCB's practice was to deduct an amount equal to ERIP benefits from any earnings-replacement benefits payable to former Devco employees. The WCB changed its practice with respect to ERIP benefits starting in December 2009. The Program is involved in several cases at WCAT challenging the reduction of these workers' earnings-replacement benefits prior to December 2009 because they received ERIP benefits. The issue of the effective date for the WCB's change in practice regarding ERIP benefits may end up being decided in the Nova Scotia Court of Appeal.

At the Nova Scotia Court of Appeal, we were successful in *Ellsworth v. Nova Scotia (Workers' Compensation Appeals Tribunal)*, 2013 NSCA 131

(CanLII). In *Ellsworth*, the Court allowed our appeal and ruled that a worker injured prior to March 23, 1990 (the cut-off date in so-called pre-*Hayden* claims), but who continued working until he had another injury in 2006 and who was not recognized as having a permanent-impairment rating until after the 2006 injury, qualified for wage loss benefits under the *Workers' Compensation Act*. The Court's decision in *Ellsworth* diverged from the WCB's previous approach in such claims. The Court's reasons in *Ellsworth* distinguished its earlier decision in *Lowe v. Nova Scotia (Workers' Compensation Appeals Tribunal)*, [1998] NSJ No. 99 (QL).

More generally, *Ellsworth* highlights the relatively low level of workers' compensation benefits available to workers under sections 226 and 227 of the *Workers' Compensation Act*, which apply to pre-*Hayden* claims, and whose claims are not similar to the fact situation in *Ellsworth*.

The WCB completed its public consultation and review with respect to psychological stress. The WCB's policy on psychological stress was revised with respect to covered non-federal workers in Nova Scotia, but no changes were made to the policy applicable to federal employees. Last year I reported that WCAT rendered a panel decision on December 6, 2012 that found the definition of "accident" in the *Workers' Compensation Act*, to the extent it excludes coverage for stress unless it is an acute reaction to a traumatic event, does not violate the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. On behalf of the worker in that case, the Program applied for leave to appeal to the Nova Scotia Court of Appeal. The name of this case is *John Dale v. Nova Scotia Workers' Compensation Appeals Tribunal, et al.*, C.A. No. 410753. This appeal was placed on hold while we waited for the WCB to complete its review. Now that this review has been completed, we have decided to proceed with the *Dale* case to the Court of Appeal.

The Program represents a former wife of a deceased worker who died in a workplace accident in January 2013. At the time of his death, the worker was making court-ordered maintenance and support payments to his former wife. The WCB decided that under the *Workers' Compensation Act* the former wife was not entitled to receive survivor benefits or any other benefits to compensate for her lost payments due to her former husband's death. This case is currently before WCAT and involves arguments under the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.

The Program is also involved in cases currently before WCAT dealing with request for the WCB to cover medically-prescribed marijuana. This issue is timely in light of the recent change in the federal system dealing with the legal possession and use of medical marijuana.

The Supreme Court of Canada recently made a couple of significant workers' compensation decisions which the Program was not involved in. *Marine Services International Ltd. v. Ryan Estate*, 2013 SCC 44 (CanLII), concerned an appeal from a decision of the Newfoundland and Labrador Court of Appeal. The issue in this case was about the interaction between the right to sue by dependents of deceased fishers, under the federal *Marine Liability Act*, and the bar against suing employers and others under the provincial workers' compensation statute. The Supreme Court of Canada decided that the dependents were barred from suing under the federal legislation and were required to pursue the compensation available in Newfoundland and Labrador's workers' compensation system.

In *Martin v. Alberta (Workers' Compensation Board)*, 2014 SCC 25 (CanLII), the Supreme Court of Canada dismissed a federal employee's appeal from a decision of the Alberta Court of Appeal. The Supreme Court of Canada confirmed that the provincial workers' compensation board's

stress policy applied to the federal employee's claim. The Court's reasons confirmed that federal employees who suffer workplace injuries are entitled to compensation at the same rate and under the same conditions as provided under the provincial law where the employee is usually employed, and compensation is determined by the same board, officers or authority as determine compensation under provincial law. The federal legislation, the *Government Employees' Compensation Act*, requires the application of the relevant provincial law to federal employees unless it conflicts with the federal statute.

In September 2013 I attended the annual meeting of the Canadian Association of Workers Advisors and Advocates ("CAWAA") in Toronto, Ontario. 2013 was the 100th anniversary of the Meredith report, which provided the recommendations that are fundamental to workers' compensation systems in Canada. I presented a paper at the CAWAA meeting in Toronto which reviewed the Meredith report and related legal developments since it was released in October 1913. The annual CAWAA meeting and CAWAA telephone conferences throughout the year are great opportunities to network and exchange information with counterparts from across the country.

In November 2013 I prepared a paper and made a presentation to a session of the Canadian Institute for Administrative Justice at the Schulich School of Law at Dalhousie University. My presentation concerned workers' compensation law and chronic pain and related issues in the context of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.

At other times in 2013/2014, I met and discussed various workers' compensation issues with staff from the Office of the Worker Counselor and representatives from Injured Workers' Associations.

I continued to serve as a member of the Heads of Agencies Committee and the Issues Resolution Working Group as we worked to try to improve services to stakeholders of the Workplace Safety and Insurance System ("WSIS"). In my role as Chief Worker Adviser, I participated in the WSIS Annual General Meeting in May 2013.

I regularly attended meetings of the Department of Labour and Advanced Education's Senior Management Team and with my fellow directors from the Department's Labour Services Branch.

I also took part in various in-person and online training sessions in 2013/2014. These sessions were relevant to my work as a government employee and as a practicing lawyer in Nova Scotia. It is worth noting that the Nova Scotia Barristers' Society mandated at least 12 hours of continuing legal education per year for lawyers starting in 2012.

We look forward to another busy and successful year in 2014/2015.

Submitted,

Kenny LeBlanc
Chief Worker Adviser

Mandate and History

Injured workers covered under Nova Scotia's *Workers' Compensation Act* are protected through benefits and services available under a no-fault insurance system. Through what is known as the historic trade-off, workers and their families give up the right to sue for the consequences of work-related injuries in return for compensation payable regardless of fault and without the need to pursue a lawsuit in court. The other side of the historic trade-off is that employers must pay assessments to cover the cost of the system in return for immunity from civil liability arising from work-related injuries.

The Workers' Compensation Board of Nova Scotia (WCB), is established under Part I of the *Workers' Compensation Act*. The WCB is the policy-leader for the workers' compensation system and investigates and adjudicates workers' claims in the first instance. The WCB also administers the Accident Fund, which is made up of employers' assessments and covers the costs of the workers' compensation system.

Workers or employers may appeal WCB final decisions to the Nova Scotia Workers' Compensation Appeals Tribunal (WCAT), established under Part II of the *Workers' Compensation Act*. There is a limited right of appeal from WCAT decisions to the Nova Scotia Court of Appeal.

The Workers' Advisers Program was established in February 1996 when Part III, along with most of the rest of the current *Workers' Compensation Act*, was proclaimed into force. The Workers' Advisers Program under Part III replaced the former Workers' Counselors' Program, which administered a certificate system whereby private law firms around the province provided legal representation to workers in connection with their workers' compensation claims.

The Workers' Advisers Program is an independent legal clinic that provides free assistance, advice, and representation to injured workers and their families claiming workers' compensation benefits and who meet the Program's eligibility criteria.

As a general rule, if the Program determines that a worker has a reasonable expectation of success of obtaining at least $500 or its equivalent in an appeal of a claim, that worker will meet the Program's eligibility criteria for service.

The Program receives the funding for its operations by way of a grant from the Accident Fund.

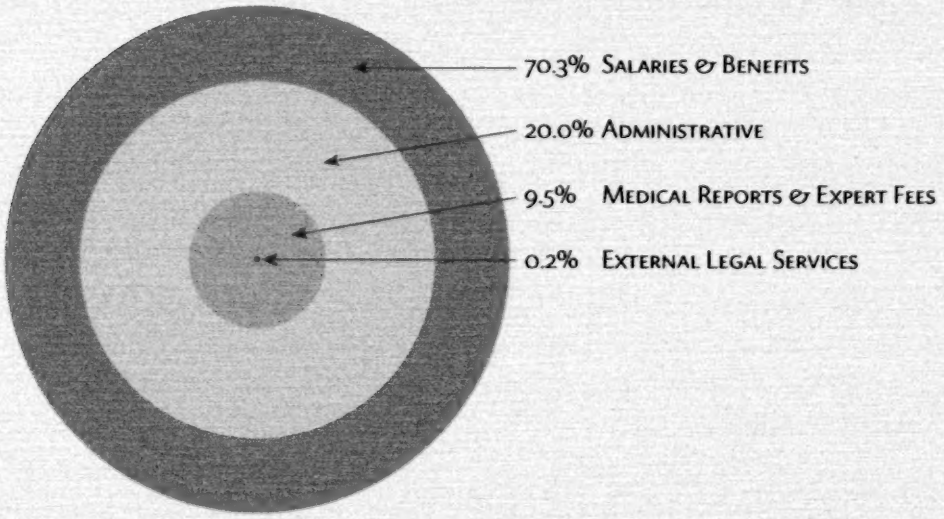
The Chief Worker Adviser supervises the Program and reports to the Minister of Nova Scotia's Department of Labour and Advanced Education. The Program's head office is in Halifax and with a second office in Sydney. The Program has maintained the Halifax and Sydney offices since May 1997, while monitoring the caseload by county to determine whether other offices in other parts of the province should be opened.

Annual Program Expenditures

The total cost associated with the operation of the Program is charged to the Accident Fund administered by the WCB. The final 2013-2014 report provided by the Department of Finance indicates the following expenditures:

	2013-14	2012-13	2011-12	2010-11	2009-10	2008-09
Salaries & Benefits	**$1,913,991**	$1,804,407	$1,904,748	$1,717,753	$1,593,543	$1,643,841
Administrative	**$543,765**	$470,033	$494,228	$534,275	$547,932	$520,494
Legal Services - External	**$6,448**	$2,886	$6,027	$10,731	$2,067	$1,895
Medical Reports & Expert Fees	**$257,976**	$300,543	$291,871	$275,182	$257,401	$138,257
Less Chargeable to Other Departments	**($17,061)**	($3,011)	$0	($27,210)	($11,162)	($102,310)
Total	**$2,705,119**	$2,574,849	$2,696,876	$2,510,731	$2,378,619	$2,202,117
% of Authority Spent	**97.0%**	93.6%	100.4%	102.0%	97.1%	89.5%

2013-2014 Financial Expenditures



10 Personal

The Chief Worker Adviser, the Secretary to the Chief Worker Adviser, the Intake Clerk, nine Workers' Advisers, a secretary/receptionist, and two secretaries work out of the Halifax office. Two Workers' Advisers, the Program's Supervisor Office Services, a secretary/receptionist, and a secretary work out of the Sydney office.

Organizational Chart

Minister of Labour & Advanced Education

Deputy Minister Labour & Advanced Education

Executive Director Labour Services Branch
Labour & Advanced Education

WORKERS' ADVISERS PROGRAM
Chief Worker Adviser Kenny LeBlanc

Secretary to Chief Worker Adviser
Brenda Potvin (Halifax)

Workers' Advisers
Halifax:
Bill MacDonald
Patricia Dunn
Terry Brown
Bill Powroz
Dorothy McLean
Jane Spurr
Michelle Margolian
Stephen Lawlor
Vanessa Nicholson
David McCluskey

Sydney:
Eleanor Neal
Rick MacCuish

Supervisor Office Services
Linda Peckham (Sydney)

Intake Clerk
Margaret Odell (Halifax)

Secretaries
Heather Bélanger (Halifax)
Janice Harnish (Halifax)
Shirley DiPersio (Sydney)

Receptionist/Secretary
Terry Cox (Halifax)
Kelley Flannigan (Sydney)

Client Services

The Workers' Advisers Program is a public legal clinic established to help eligible injured workers and their families seeking compensation under the *Workers' Compensation Act*.

The Program provides free legal services independent of the Workers' Compensation Board and the Workers' Compensation Appeals Tribunal. Clients of the Program are in a solicitor-client relationship with the Program and its staff, in the same way as they would be with any other lawyer or law firm in Nova Scotia.

The service provided to workers by the Workers' Advisers Program can include representation through all phases of appeal in the workers' compensation system. It can begin with the first denial at the WCB and end when an appeal is completed or the worker is no longer eligible for service.

Anyone who wants to be a client of the Program must go through our "intake process".

Intake

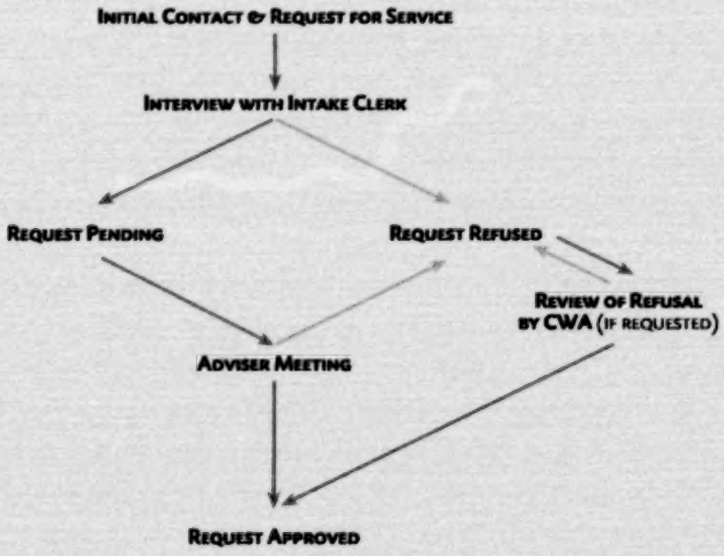
The Program's intake process begins with a determination of whether the worker's request for service results from a written WCB decision. If the worker does not have a written decision, the Intake Clerk will usually refuse service.

If the worker has a written WCB decision, the Intake Clerk will obtain the necessary information from the worker and open a file, which will be assigned to a Workers' Adviser. Workers' Advisers are lawyers and non-lawyers with the necessary training and experience to provide legal services to injured workers and their families relating to workers' compensation matters.

A Workers' Adviser will review the file and contact the worker to advise whether the Program will provide legal services.

A worker refused service from the Program may request that the Chief Worker Adviser give further consideration to the request for legal services. The Chief Worker Adviser's determination in this regard is the final determination on whether the Program will provide services in the case.

A worker requesting service from the Program for the first time as a result of a WCAT decision bypasses the usual intake process and is referred directly to the Chief Worker Adviser for review and consideration. This process is followed in relation to WCAT decisions because a worker only has 30 days under the *Workers' Compensation Act* to file a possible appeal to the Nova Scotia Court of Appeal from a WCAT decision.



In general, in order to qualify for services, an injured worker must have a reasonable expectation in success in obtaining at least $500 or the equivalent in an appeal from a written decision.

Part III of the *Workers' Compensation Act* states that it does not give any person a right to legal advice or representation under the Workers' Advisers Program.

If the worker is denied legal services by the Program, the worker may continue to pursue the appeal on his or her own and the worker may retain legal representation at his or her own expense. The Program's denial of services has no impact on the status of a worker's appeal.

The Workers' Advisers Program does not represent injured workers as a special interest group or lobby government for changes in legislation. The Program does not pursue other matters outside of workers' compensation claims, such as Canada Pension benefits, Unemployment Insurance, or Social Assistance.

Workers' Advisers do not represent employers and they do not advise or represent governments or other agencies.

Case Summary Statistics

Active # files at year beginning April 1, 2013 = 868
Active # files at year ending March 31, 2014 = 1101

2013-14	Requests for Service/Files Processed Through Intake	# of Requests/ Representations Denied	Files Closed	# Clients Served 2013-14
Apr/May/Jun	225	69	208	1093
Jul/Aug/Sep	227	36	93	1320
Oct/Nov/Dec	217	66	147	1537
Jan/Feb/Mar	215	60	193	1752
Total For Year	**884**	**231**	**641**	**1752**

"Requests for Service" represents the number of calls received by the Intake Clerk for processing during each of the reporting periods. During 2013-14 we received an average of 73.7 requests for service per month.

There were 231 refusals of service.

The "# Clients Served 2013-14" represents the number of active files on April 1, 2013, combined with the total number of files opened to the end of the fiscal year (March 31, 2014).

The Program carried an average of 992 active files over the course of 2013-14.

On March 31, 2014, there were 113 pending service requests or clients that had gone through the intake process but had not yet been contacted by a Workers' Adviser to discuss their case.

After the initial intake process is complete, files are assigned to Workers' Advisers by a team leader who reviews the files to ensure eligibility. The team leader considers geographic region, type of injury or illness, and caseloads when assigning files to Workers' Advisers. In 2013-14 the Workers' Advisers each carried an average caseload of 83 active files. This number has increased from an average of 69 files in 2012-13, a 20% increase.

14 Process

Service Waiting Time

	Local		Out-of-Town		
Intake Period 2013-14	Halifax	Sydney	Bridgewater Yarmouth	Digby Kentville Amherst/Truro	New Glasgow Antigonish Port Hawkesbury
April - May - June	5.1	4.6	5.6	5.8	5.8
July - August - September	5.5	6.1	5.8	6.2	5.9
October - November - December	6.0	6.3	5.1	6.3	6.9
January - February - March	8.6	6.9	7.0	9.8	8.0
Area Averages	**6.2**	**6.1**	**5.8**	**7.0**	**6.7**

Local Offices Average Waiting Period: 6.2 weeks

Out-of-Town Average Waiting Period: 6.5 weeks

Provincial Average Waiting Period: 6.4 weeks

The waiting period for service for all intake is calculated from the date the worker first contacts the Intake Clerk to the date of the worker's first appointment with a Workers' Adviser (in person or by telephone) to discuss the worker's appeal.

The Program monitor the waiting time for service on a monthly basis. Our goal is to respond to requests for service by meeting with the worker within 6 weeks of their initial request. **The provincial average waiting period for 2013-14 was 6.4 weeks (includes local and out-of-town times).**

Factors affecting service wait times include delays in obtaining access to the WCB claim files, both paper and electronic, and the Workers' Advisers' workload and travel to out-of-town appointments or hearings.

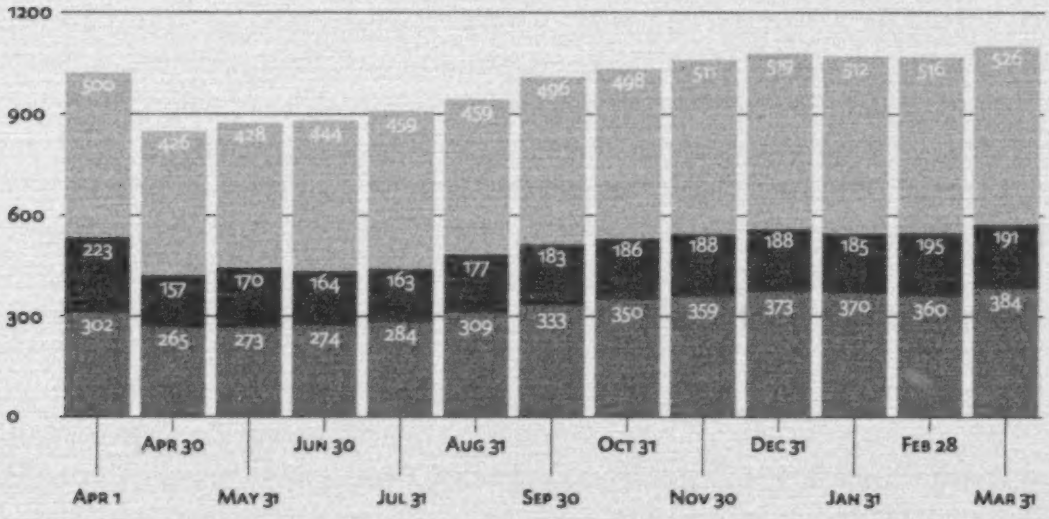
Client Count by County

On April 1, 2013, the Program had 868 active files. On March 31, 2014, there were 1101 active files, a 25.7 percent increase over the course of the year with an average of 992 open files between April 1 and March 31.

County	Apr 1	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar 31
Annapolis	18	18	19	23	23	24	23	25	25	25	27	25	23
Antigonish	8	8	10	10	12	11	12	11	10	12	10	10	9
Cape Breton	165	157	170	164	163	177	183	186	188	188	185	195	191
Colchester	33	32	32	36	37	39	40	40	41	44	51	50	51
Cumberland	49	46	49	46	47	48	47	51	55	54	50	50	52
Digby	6	8	8	10	11	11	11	12	13	14	13	12	13
Guysborough	14	14	15	18	17	18	19	22	20	20	19	18	18
Halifax	268	265	273	274	284	309	333	350	359	373	370	360	384
Hants	37	35	36	35	36	45	46	44	48	49	48	53	52
Inverness	12	14	15	15	13	14	17	18	20	18	17	17	17
Kings	64	61	62	59	61	68	68	64	68	70	64	66	65
Lunenburg	69	63	56	59	68	73	78	77	75	76	78	75	78
Pictou	50	51	54	54	56	55	56	56	60	60	58	60	67
Queens	21	22	22	24	23	23	23	23	22	22	22	23	24
Richmond	9	10	9	10	9	9	10	10	9	9	9	10	10
Shelbourne	11	10	7	8	8	8	8	10	9	10	10	10	11
Victoria	7	6	6	7	7	7	7	6	7	6	5	5	5
Yarmouth	12	12	13	14	15	15	15	14	15	15	16	17	17
Other	15	16	15	16	16	16	16	15	14	15	15	15	14
Total	**868**	**848**	**871**	**882**	**906**	**970**	**1012**	**1034**	**1058**	**1080**	**1067**	**1071**	**1101**

File reviews/audits are completed on a on-going basis.

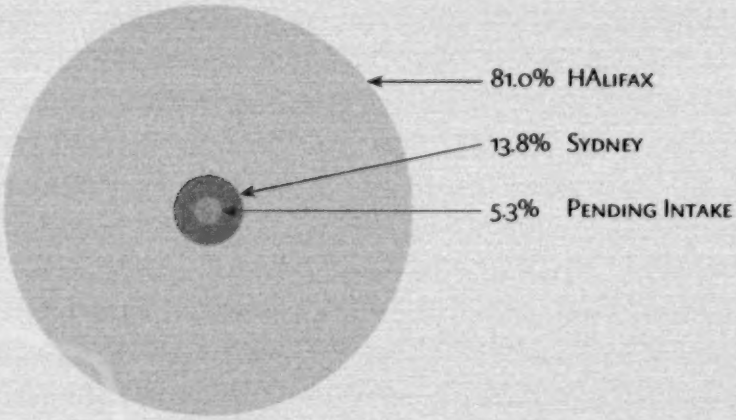
The Program's primary role is to help workers with their appeals and we usually do this on an issue-by-issue basis. When a worker contacts the Program for help, it is typically because of a particular issue relating to a claim. When this issue is resolved in the worker's favour or if the Workers' Adviser determines there is no reasonable expectation of success in an appeal, we will close the file for services.



The above chart graphically displays the proportion of clients living in Halifax, Cape Breton and Out of Town. The Out of Town figures represent all clients living outside metro Halifax or Cape Breton.

An average of 32.9 percent of the Program's clients live within the Halifax Regional Municipality; 18.1 percent live within the Cape Breton Regional Municipality and 49 percent reside outside the CBRM or HRM areas.

Files are distributed between the Halifax and Sydney offices. One of the Advisers serving the Sydney area is located in Halifax.



Representation

Workers' Advisers provide representation to injured workers and their families pursuing workers' compensation benefits and services. Workers' Advisers consult with workers and others regarding claims, attend meetings and hearings, and obtain evidence and present it to workers' compensation decision makers.

Workers' Advisers have access to research and other resources required to pursue appeals. They are familiar with issues and pressures affecting injured workers and strive to achieve an effective working relationship with them.

The Workers' Advisers Program does not represent injured workers as a special interest group or lobby government for changes in legislation. The Program does not pursue other matters outside of workers' compensation claims, such as Canada Pension benefits, Unemployment Insurance, or Social Assistance.

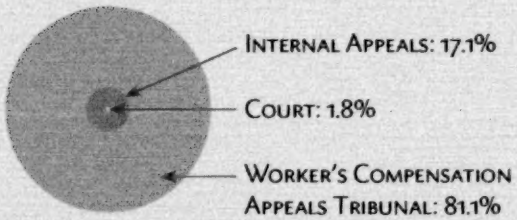
Workers' Advisers do not represent employers and they do not advise or represent governments or other agencies.

Program Statistics

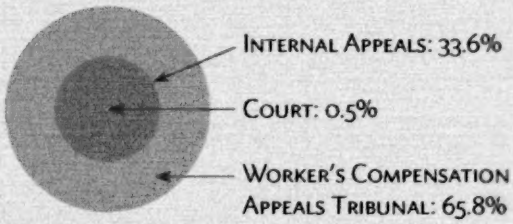
	Submissions/Hearings Done			New Appeals Filed		
	Court	Hearing Officer	WCAT	Court	Hearing Officer	WCAT
April	2	14	37	0	16	31
May	1	14	47	0	18	45
June	1	8	35	1	16	32
July	0	4	51	0	11	19
August	1	6	31	0	12	41
September	1	7	31	0	11	20
October	1	9	45	0	14	25
November	1	10	35	2	17	42
December	2	2	33	0	30	44
January	0	13	28	0	11	12
February	0	4	39	0	14	21
March	0	2	30	0	17	34
Total	**10**	**93**	**442**	**3**	**187**	**366**

- The Program's resources are mainly focussed on appeals at the WCAT level.
- Workers typically file their own appeals to the Hearing Officer before going through the Program's intake process.
- The Program filed 3 new appeals to the Court of Appeal during the year 2013/2014. An appeal to the Court of Appeal is limited because an appeal can only be made from an Appeals Tribunal decision on a question of law or jurisdiction pursuant to s.256 of the *Workers' Compensation Act*.

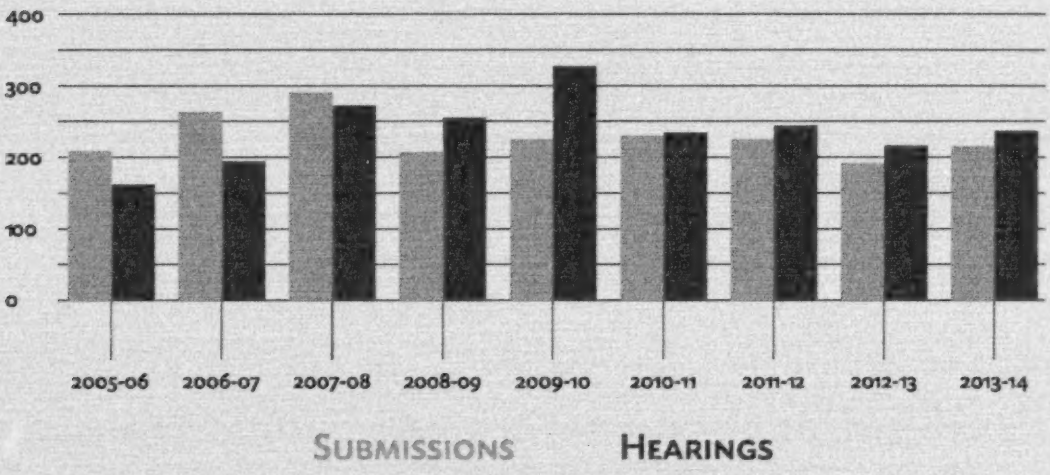
Hearings/Submissions



New Appeals Files



Number of Hearings and Submissions



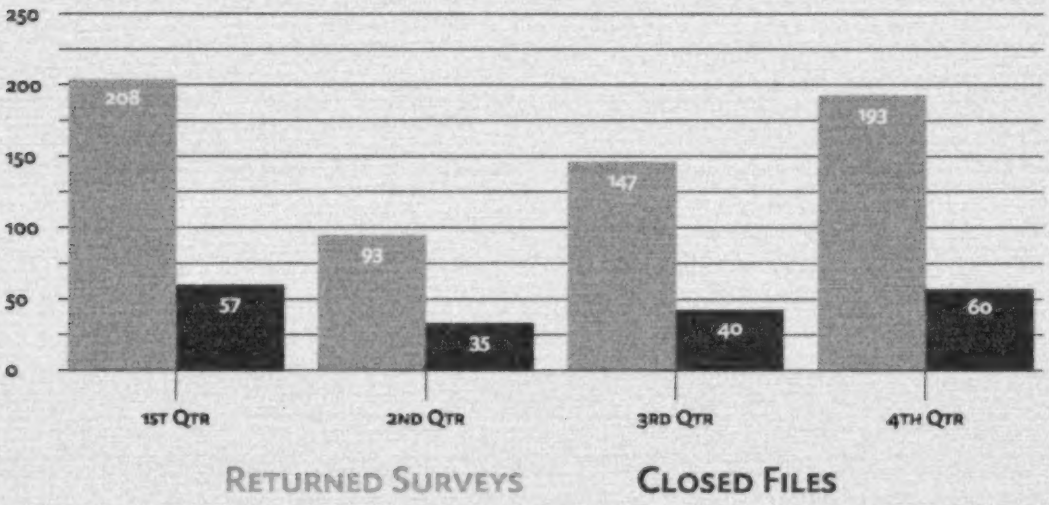
Client Satisfaction

Client Survey Results

The Program began mailing satisfaction surveys to clients with their closed files in April 2003. This practice will continue so that future results will allow us to track satisfaction trends and address service issues.

	Apr/May/ Jun	Jul/Aug/ Sep	Oct/Nov/ Dec	Jan/Feb/ Mar	Total	% Return for Year
Closed Files	208	93	147	193	**641**	
Returned Surveys	57	35	40	60	**192**	31.1%
Provided Comments	34	24	26	38	**122**	63.5%
Not Postive Outcome	12	7	7	13	**39**	20.3%
Negative Comments	3	4	6	4	**17**	8.8%
% Return for the Quarter	27.4%	37.6%	27.2%	31.1%		
Variance from previous quarter	8.0%	9.0%	-10.4%	3.9%		

Survey Returned/Files Closed



Based on the data obtained from the returned surveys, we can determine that 89.4% of our clients "strongly agreed" or "agreed" that the service provided by the Program staff satisfied their requirements.

Specific results to our questions are as follows:		Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. The program staff I dealt with were professional and friendly at all times.	Apr/May/Jun	71.4%	25.3%	1.7%	1.7%
	Jul/Aug/Sep	74.9%	18.8%	6.3%	0.0%
	Oct/Nov/Dec	71.9%	23.8%	0%	4.3%
	Jan/Feb Mar	77.8%	20.9%	0%	1.3%
	% for year	**74.0%**	**22.2%**	**2.0%**	**1.8%**
2. In my experience, I felt the program staff had the knowledge and experience for dealing with my situation.	Apr/May/Jun	71.8%	24.9%	0%	3.3%
	Jul/Aug/Sep	73.5%	16.5%	0%	10.0%
	Oct/Nov/Dec	76.4%	19.4%	0%	4.2%
	Jan/Feb Mar	77.3%	17.6%	2.6%	2.6%
	% for year	**74.7%**	**19.6%**	**0.6%**	**5.0%**
3. I felt the program staff did their very best to provide me with the best possible service.	Apr/May/Jun	79.2%	17.5%	0%	3.3%
	Jul/Aug/Sep	69.8%	20.2%	0%	10.0%
	Oct/Nov/Dec	77.8%	15.7%	0%	6.4%
	Jan/Feb Mar	78.5%	15.0%	3.9%	2.6%
	% for year	**76.4%**	**17.1%**	**1.0%**	**5.6%**
		All the time	**Most of the time**	**Sometimes**	**Never**
4. My calls were returned within 24 hours.	Apr/May/Jun	52.2%	31.9%	12.6%	3.3%
	Jul/Aug/Sep	54.7%	27.9%	10.0%	3.7%
	Oct/Nov/Dec	65.0%	30.6%	2.2%	0%
	Jan/Feb Mar	44.9%	41.9%	11.7%	1.5%
	% for year	**54.2%**	**33.1%**	**9.1%**	**2.1%**
5. My questions were answered to my satisfaction	Apr/May/Jun	81.1%	14.6%	2.4%	3.3%
	Jul/Aug/Sep	69.8%	17.7%	12.5%	0%
	Oct/Nov/Dec	72.4%	21.1%	0%	4.3%
	Jan/Feb Mar	76.4%	14.5%	9.0%	0%
	% for year	**74.9%**	**17.0%**	**6.0%**	**1.9%**
Satisfaction Rating			**91.9%**		**7%**

Canadian Association of Worker's Advisers and Advocates

The Canadian Association of Worker's Advisers and Advocates (CAWAA) is a national organization established to develop a professional system of sharing information and best practices across jurisdictions and explore emerging workers' compensation issues relevant to workers while respecting its members' distinct workers' compensation mandates.

The Chief Worker Adviser represents the Nova Scotia Workers' Advisers Program at this association and chairs its Research Committee. Additional information on this association is available on their website: http://cawaa.org/

Workplace Safety and Insurance System

Advisory Councils and Working Groups

Nova Scotia's **Workplace Safety and Insurance System** (WSIS) includes workers, employers, the relevant statutory agencies (the WCB, WCAT, the Occupational Health and Safety Division of the Department of Labour and Advanced Education, and the Workers' Advisers Program), and others who provide services in the system. Additional information is available on the WSIS website: http://www.wsis.ns.ca/index.php

The Issues Resolution Working Group and a sub-committee, the Appeal Issues Discussion Group, consist of representatives from the Workers' Advisers Program, the WCB, and WCAT. These committees meet regularly to discuss workers' compensation issues and advise system partners on ways to improve issues resolution in the workers' compensation system.

The **Heads of Agencies Committee** is comprised of the heads of the four statutory system agencies:

- Director of the Occupational Health and Safety Division;
- Chief Worker Adviser of the Workers' Advisers Program;
- Chief Appeal Commissioner of WCAT; and
- CEO of the WCB.

Members of the Heads of Agencies Committee are responsible for the ongoing delivery of service to workers and employees in the system and for measuring and reporting of outcomes and progress in alignment with system goals. They are also responsible for coordinating strategic plan implementation.

Other Committees and Associations

Workers' Advisers Program staff are involved in other committees and associations to enhance their contribution to the workers' compensation system, the Department, and community. They include:

- Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee
- Labour and Advanced Education Senior Management
- Nova Scotia Barristers' Society
- Canadian Bar Association
- Labour and Advanced Education Diversity Committee

21 Professional Development and Training

This year, as in the past, Program staff members took part in training programs to enhance their professional skills and personal development.

Starting in 2013 the Nova Scotia Barristers Society requires all lawyers to take 12 hours of continuing legal education per year. Workers' Advisers attended various courses put on by Canadian Bar Association, the Nova Scotia Barristers Society, and other training providers.

Throughout the year staff members attended various government mandatory and optional courses and training sessions.

The Workers' Advisers Program is committed to ensuring our people are provided with opportunities to acquire and improve their accreditations and skills.

Notes

Workers' Advisers Program
5670 Spring Garden Road
Suite 502
PO Box 1063
Halifax, NS
B3J 2X1